

NEWS BULLETIN

SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT of CIVIL SERVICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

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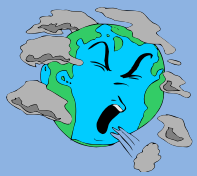
STEVE LEVY
Suffolk County Executive

ALAN SCHNEIDER
Personnel Director

September 2010

For **Y**our **I**nformation from...Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy's Cancer Awareness Task Force

Are you keeping score? When 100 is not considered a good grade...



DO YOU KNOW...ozone is the principal component of the mixture of air pollutants known as "smog" that are produced from the action of sunlight on air contaminants from automobile exhaust and other sources? Ozone is a severe irritant that can cause choking, coughing and stinging eyes. It can damage lung tissue, aggravate respiratory disease and make people more susceptible to respiratory infections when levels in the outdoors are high.

How do we know when the levels are high? Ozone levels are most likely to be elevated after noon through early evening on hot, sunny days. The **Air Quality Index (AQI)** is an index for reporting daily air quality. It tells you how clean or polluted your air is, and what associated health effects might be a concern for you. It was created as an easy way to correlate levels of different pollutants to one scale; **the higher the AQI value, the greater the health concern.** When levels of ozone and/or fine particles are expected to **exceed an AQI value of 100**, an Air Quality Health Advisory is issued alerting sensitive groups to take the necessary precautions.

Air Quality Forecasts (AQF's) are available on the Department of Environmental Conservation website at http://www.dec.ny.gov/cfm/xtapps/aqi/aqi_forecast.cfm

What precautions can we take when levels are high? When ozone levels are elevated, the New York State Department of Health recommends limiting strenuous outdoor physical activity, especially during afternoon and evening hours, to reduce the risk of adverse effects. People who may be especially sensitive to the effects of ozone exposure include young children, the elderly, those who exercise or are involved in strenuous outdoor work, and those with pre-existing respiratory or heart problems. Those with symptoms may want to see their personal physician.

How can we help? Car exhaust is a major contributor to ozone pollution. Motor vehicle emissions make up **nearly half** of the pollution that causes ozone. Try to carpool whenever possible or use public transportation. If you must use your car, make sure it's running efficiently.



For help with your Long Island commute, you may want to check to see if your employer is a member of Nuride, the on-line community where you can track your savings and earn rewards for a greener commute. www.nuride.com Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy has been a big supporter of this program which he made available to county employees.

Links:

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/24.html>

New York State Department of Health has an ozone fact sheet which can be accessed at <http://www.health.state.ny.us/environmental/outdoors/air/ozone.htm>

Further Info:

NYS Department of Health at 1-800-458-1158

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation at 1-800-535-1345



The Cancer Awareness Task Force was formed in 2004 and is composed of anti-cancer advocates, medical care organizations, cancer researchers and county staff from the departments of Health Services and Environment and Energy. Their mission is to educate residents regarding the prevention of cancer, to increase access to care and to expand cancer services for all county residents.